STATINTL

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BALTIMORE, MD.
SUN
M - 164,621
E - 189,871
S - 323,624
DEC 22 1972

Behind the Curtain

It is not given to ordinary mortals to know much of what goes on behind the cloak of the Central Intelligence Agency. We are not told, for example, how much money it has to spend—although reports suggest it exceeds $750 million annually. No more are we told of what it does with the money—although there is a general understanding it fields perhaps 10,000 people throughout the world on shadowy missions, some more activist than others, to ferret out information useful in shoring up this nation's security. What few can know outside the highest governmental levels is precisely what policies the CIA pursues and how effectively, or ineffectively, it manages them. At the Bay of Pigs, according to some versions, the CIA stumbled badly. In its estimates on the military capabilities of North Vietnam, to go by the Pentagon Papers, the CIA has been consistently more accurate—and more ominous—than most. But these are only random clues too skimpy for an illuminating pattern.

One result of this studied mystery is that the CIA has no public constituency of its own, that it must stand silent and undefended before the will of the only authority to which it need answer. This is the White House, which has just announced a change in the directorship. Richard Helms, something of a professional in intelligence work, is replaced by James R. Schlesinger, a younger man impressively conditioned in more varied administrative fields. At first glance, and to the extent that an appraisal is possible, Mr. Schlesinger has the air of a man well up to his challenging, tricky new job. The only qualm about the changeover arises from suggestions—facts, of course, being unavailable—that Mr. Helms is being shipped out because the CIA under his leadership has not shared the rosy view of the Vietnamese operations which the White House prefers. Mr. Schlesinger must resist any temptations to paint up Vietnam to some hue which, however desirable, the truth is too bleak to warrant.